

Something Went Right

Psalm 31:3: "For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me."

Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Psalm 57:2: "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

My wife and I miss being with you today. We have been blessed to be with my brother, Pastor David Pope these past few days in Holdenville, Oklahoma where we have had an excellent revival meeting. Just before we left our house to come to Oklahoma, my wife thought she was having the symptoms of a summer cold and felt well enough to come to the meeting with me (any opportunity I can have my wife with me; I take it). The closer we got to Oklahoma, the worse she began to feel. Once arriving, for good measure, she took a COVID test and to our surprise, she tested positive! Through the two years of the ubiquitous COVID that everyone was getting, including me (twice), my wife was not affected or infected in the least. We began to presume she was bullet-proof. She is not. Thankfully, by the time you read these words, she will be out of quarantine and feeling better. Ah! if only we had tested before leaving! All of us will sometimes experience what has been defined as misfortunes from time to time. It is at this time we wonder, what could we have done to prevent them. We ask ourselves, are we in the will of God? Is there a hindrance caused by our disobedience that would interpret the calamity as punitive. If what we are experiencing is chastening due to our disobedience, we should ask for forgiveness and be revived. It is at this time the Lord will set us on the original track He has chosen for us. So often is the case, however, that the hardship is not punitive, but rather instructive. These are times when God is teaching us, as Psalm 32:8 says, that God will teach us and guide us with His eye. And He sees what's best for us much clearer than we see for ourselves. The events that have sometimes been labeled misfortunes are things God is doing "for us," not "to us!" (Psalm 57:2).

In the pessimistic environment that our own worry invents, we frequently ask, "What went wrong?" Today, I would invite your attention on these few lines with an event that "went right." In the overall plan of God, all things do work together for what is best for God's servants who love Him (Romans 8:28). I constantly remind myself of the promise of Psalm 119:68: "Thou art good, and doest good...." Many times we forget to credit the good our Lord does, which comes in the disguise of the bad that ultimately turns out right.

When our oldest son, Jonathan was about nine years old I took him with me to a Bible Conference in which I was preaching in Beaumont, Texas. When I received an invitation to a meeting within driving distance and the kids did not have any school conflicts, I often would take one of them with me. This was Jonathan's turn to go with Daddy. I enjoyed his non-stop boyish chatter all the way from Houston to Beaumont.

The pastor had informed me of the location of the motel where Jonathan and I would be staying. It was on the feeder of Interstate 10, very easy to find. We checked in and as the desk clerk was assigning our room to us, I asked her where would our room be located. With the key in my hand, I stepped outside the door and realized our room

was on the corner at the front where there would be the sound of Interstate traffic as well as a throughway for pedestrians. After coming back inside, I asked the clerk if she could put us in another room that would be quieter. Jonathan was tired; he needed sleep and I needed some solitude for prayer and meditation. The kind lady at the desk exchanged keys with me and said, "This is the last available room." It was located in the far back corner, which was fine with me. We took it!

We had a good service at church that night and by the time Jonathan lay on his bed and I on the other bed, we went right to sleep (which is still a rarity for both of us to this day). I awakened early and found the spot just in front of the sink a good place to pray. After praying, I flipped the switch to turn on the light to read my Bible, but there was no light. At that time I noticed the air conditioning was not working. The temperature was not uncomfortable, so I decided to pull back the curtain and receive the early morning light to illuminate my pages. When I finished up devotions I opened the curtains wide and began to sing to Jonathan in order to wake him up. I said, "Let's go get some breakfast." We dressed in the semi-lit room due to the electricity being out. When we exited the room, there was an eerie unnatural silence for such an otherwise busy place. As Jonathan and I walked to the front of the building we saw emergency lights everywhere. I held onto Jonathan's hand and said, "Let's go check it out." We found out why there was no electricity. In the early morning, a man driving a giant dump truck fell asleep and at a high speed came off the interstate and hit the corner of our motel with explosive force. It was the corner room where Jonathan and I had been assigned the day before. I inquired of the time. It happened at the time I was having my prayer time. Still holding to my little boy's hand with an added dimension of appreciation, we walked carefully to where the room used to be. I could see the spot where I would have been praying, I saw where the bed would have been that Jonathan would have innocently occupied. I inquired if anyone was in the room and was told the man had just stepped out when the truck demolished the room. No one was hurt. To God be the glory.

From the previous afternoon until the next morning in the midst of everything that seemed to go wrong for the trucker and motel – there was something that went right for Jonathan and his dad! I'm glad Barbara, Heather, Juliana and Sean did not have to live without Jonathan and Dad. I write these words in Oklahoma. Tomorrow Jonathan and his family are coming down to see us while we are here in Oklahoma. I cannot help but think as I look into the face of my grown son, soon to turn 40 years of age, and the faces of his family, I shall be prone to say, something "went right" 31 years ago when we changed rooms, otherwise, we would not be having fellowship with this young man or his family.

There have been people whose lives have been saved when no human explanation could be made. I am convinced all of us have experienced times when we did not recognize the protection God gave us at the time, that could have turned out wrong. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee...For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:7, 11). Satan quoted this passage to the Lord Jesus when he was tempting Christ (Matthew 4:6). Do you know why the Devil was so familiar with Psalm 91:11? The answer is obvious; he had been foiled many times due to the promise of God's protection.

Why not set aside some time with your family and discuss this subject? Talk about it and give God praise for those things in life that went right.

-Pastor Pope-